Bertrand Russell on Freedom's Meaning, P. 4

Samuel Shapiro Fired By Michigan State, Under Attack for Friendly Reports on Cuba, See Page 3

I. F. Stone's Weekly

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Is It Un-American To Be Un-Chinese?

It was the biggest such affair I can recall since the days of McCarthy. It was also the dirtiest. The caucus room of the Old House Office Building was packed with women, many with babes in arms whose sudden high-pitched babbling offered comic relief in the more tense moments. A bizarre touch was also supplied by ex-FBI man Jack Levine who strode forward suddenly to shout, "As a former FBI agent, I petition you to discontinue these hearings." He was quickly hustled out to face the TV cameras. It was a responsive audience. It even applauded the subcommittee chairman, Clyde Doyle of California, when in his opening statement he said, "The fact that Communists are active in peace agitation does not mean that everyone who agitates for peace is a Communist or fellow traveller," creating for one moment the chilling suspicion that the Committee itself had been infiltrated by what J. Edgar Hoover always calls "pseudo-liberals."

Not At All Party Line Dupes

I saw a lot of the Women's Strike for Peace delegation in Geneva last spring, and came away with great respect for them. They were a sober, well-informed group, with a realistic appreciation of how alike both sides were in their excuses for failing to reach agreement. This was no gathering of party line dupes, and a Congressional committee could learn a lot by talking with them in a serious atmosphere. But you could never guess it from the inquisitorial circus staged by the House Un-Americans as their three days of hearings opened. First they put on Richard A. Flink, a young New York attorney recently renowned for cooperating with the FBI for three years while Soviet agents solicited information from him. He said he had been contacted on several occasions by Women's Strike for Peace. The two sets of events were not connected by any testimony; he did not claim that Soviet agents had urged him to turn transvestite and infiltrate the women; he did not say, and he was not asked, whether he knew of Communist infiltration in the peace movement. His opening testimony was just left hanging over the organization, like a garland of skunk cabbage, in the best tradition of the old Wisconsin maestro.

The Committee then put on three witnesses. Again the tactic was familiar. When the Committee investigates, it never attempts to make a sober size-up of an organization, to study its line, to read its literature. Its investigators, most of them from the screwball fringe or ex-hotel dicks, are incapable of any such exercise. Their effort, by combing Washington's voluminous old "lists," is to turn up with some members who, because of past associations, are likely to take the Fifth and thus put a cloud on the organization in the headlines. Their efforts misfired twice on opening day. The first witness, Mrs. Blanche Posner, of Scarsdale took the Fifth when asked whether she belonged to a Communist party cell while she was a New York City school teacher from 1922 to 1952, and took the Fifth on every other question, while manfully—excuse the expression—trying to lecture the Committee on disarmament. The second witness, Mrs. Ruth E. Meyers, of Roslyn, N.Y., turned out to be one of those mistakes which enlivened the McCarthy era. Mrs. Meyers took the Fifth, too, except when Committee counsel triumphantly asked her whether she was not the Ruth Meyers who signed a New York City Councilmanic nominating petition on July 27, 1948,

(Continued on Page Two)

Voices of Protest

"The Committee's stated purpose is to investigate 'Communist infiltration into the peace movement' but such an inquiry will inevitably stifle the voices of those who dissent from the government policies in the Cold War." *—American Civil Liberties Union*

"For the first time in history, mere preparation for war is killing people and damaging their health and heredity. . . . Women would not be normal if they did not react strongly to these dangers to their most basic functions—the producing and sustaining of Life. . . .

"It will look strange indeed to thoughtful Americans and to the rest of the world at this moment, when the U.S. is in the midst of negotiations for a test ban agreement and for world disarmament, if your Committee impugns the motives and attempts to discredit and silence this healthy upsurge of public opinion."

—Women's Int'l League for Peace & Freedom

"In such a movement of thousands of individuals motivated by a common concern, it would be surprising if there were not some who would be vulnerable by reason of other associations, past or present. Persons who, in their anxiety to find a means of building a peaceful, decent world, have been tempted at one point or another by the blandishments of the Communist position, are no less human beings, no less concerned for the lives of their loved ones, than any of the rest of us. The discovery of such persons, if they exist, would in no sense compromise the deep loyalty of the overwhelming majority of women active in this movement." *—The Fellowship of Reconciliation*

"The House Committee is in fact playing into the hands of the Communists by eliminating one of the major differences between them and us: the fact that we stand for free expression. . . ."

—Ephraim London for the American Jewish Congress

'Disarmament under effective international control and a strong United Nations, imperatives of our time, are stated goals of Women's Strike for Peace. A group of citizens working for these goals within our constitutional framework should be commended, not condemned." *—Rep. Wm. F. Ryan (D., N.Y.)*

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(Continued from Page One)

for Simon P. Gerson. Committee counsel described Mr. Gerson as an "identified Communist" but neglected to add that he had so identified himself by running on the Communist ticket! At this point, however, Mrs. Meyers abandoned the Fifth and denied this was her signature. Then she added, to applause, "It looks as if, like the taxi driver, I just got caught in a traffic jam." Later she told reporters she had never been a member of the Communist Party. Obviously Committee investigators hadn't overworked themselves in checking that one.

Only By Informing

In the third witness, Mrs. Lyla Hoffman, of Great Neck, L.I., the Committee also got more than it expected, but rallied quickly to demonstrate how hazardous it is to be candid with witch hunters. Mrs. Hoffman refused to say whether she had been a Communist in 1944—22 years ago—but volunteered the information (1) that she had been working in the peace movement under no dictation other than that of her own conscience and (2) that she was not a party member and had not been one for more than five years. All this brought Mrs. Hoffman was a string of questions designed to elicit names. These she refused to answer. For the committee, as for witch hunters always, from the Inquisition's dungeons to the Lubianka's cellars, sincerity can be proven only by informing.

Every time a witness tried to explain why she was working in the peace movement, she was interrupted or cut off with the statement that the Committee wasn't interested in her motives. The question of motives had already been decided by the Committee in its opening statement. This embodied the theory that the peace movement is a plot designed to have "a disarming, mollifying, confusing and weakening effect on those nations which are the intended victims of Communism." This is the view fostered by J. Edgar Hoover, by our wackier refugee geopoliticians, and by the Pentagon's experts in riding herd on public opinion. The military itself might have written those opening phrases about the dangers of "an exaggerated desire for peace." Indeed they might also have been taken from the Chinese attacks on Khrushchev for backing down over Cuba and asserting the possibility of peaceful coexistence. The foreign policy theory embodied in the Committee's opening statement is identical with Peking's. The theory—an ancient one—is that peace is impossible until the other side, the enemy, has been eliminated. Until that happy day, softening influences must be rooted out by public exposure and brain-washing. This is the Chinese theory and this is the Chinese practice, as it is HUAC's. The parallel is so close that one may well ask whether it is now un-American to take an un-Chinese view of the world crisis.

Antidotes

To the coming Pentagon drive to sell Congress higher appropriations for more armament (particularly missiles) and an enlarged shelter program: Ralph E. Lapp's fact-packed new book, "Kill and Overkill: The Strategy of Annihilation." Dr. Lapp has long been a one-man crusade against military folly and official misrepresentation on nuclear matters. Dr. Lapp debunks a lot of the pretentious first-strike-second-strike calculations of the military intellectuals. Though long an advocate of civil defense, he now concludes shelters may "inspire a false sense of security" and themselves become a strategic weapon: "the only shelter, the only defense, in which mankind can find any real, enduring hope is disarmament."

To the everlasting propaganda campaign against Communist China: Edgar Snow's exciting "The Other Side of The River: Red China Today" the first book length report by an American in ten years from the other side of the Iron Curtain we have ourselves imposed on China. With all his old skill and courage, Snow makes China come alive, shows its great progress, disposes of Alsop-style reports from Hongkong about hungry Chinese eating after-births! We are skeptical only of the discussion of China's correction-by-labor camps and public "study groups" to show dissenters the error of their ways. Those who accepted similar euphemisms about the Soviet Union's labor camps have lived to learn better. We do not regard the absence of civil liberties as in a category with the absence of plumbing. Years ago, when the Russian Revolution had first begun, Kautsky asked Lenin how he would know what people were thinking unless there was freedom of discussion. Lenin retorted by bringing up lynchings in the U.S. South! Some day China, like Russia, will begin to recognize that iron conformity to party line exacts a heavy cost. We do not believe the thought control we fight as an evil on one side is a virtue on the other. Carefully read, Snow's own account of China's short experiment in free speech ("let a hundred flowers bloom") shows otherwise.

Negro Real Estate Brokers Attack Kennedy Housing Order as Inadequate

There was little but angry criticism of President Kennedy's anti-discrimination in housing order during the first day of the two-day legislative and policy conference held here in Washington last week-end by the National Association of Real Estate Brokers, a Negro group. The second day the press was excluded and the association met behind closed doors to hear Housing Administrator Robert C. Weaver. What emerged was a policy statement supporting the President's order but suggesting it was inadequate in failing to cover existing housing and conventional mortgages, and in failing to include savings and loans, mutual savings banks and commercial banks benefitting from Federal insurance of deposits.

Less tactful were the criticisms voiced the day before. "We would be better off," Q. V. Williamson, vice president of the organization said, "if he had not signed the order. I think the order is a camouflage because it makes it appear that it means something when it doesn't mean a thing." Williamson, who comes from Atlanta, is one of the biggest Negro mortgage bankers in the South. "Existing public housing," he protested, "was the area the President was asked to cover. Public housing constitutes the walls of segregation the government built. Why didn't he tear down those walls built with 100 percent government funds?"

A Philadelphia broker, Lenerte Roberts, pointed out, "Until conventional lending agencies are covered, we don't make a dent. All the order did was to give the real culprits—the mortgage bankers—an opportunity to escape." A Chicago broker, Wm. B. Collier, Jr., declared he thought it would have been better if the President had held the threat of an order over the housing industry instead of issuing one so weak. "The housing market is soft and the industry was thinking about minority housing," Mr. Collier said. "Now the order gives them an out because it does not cover the entire industry." That must have been a stormy session with Dr. Weaver next day.

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Proxmire Plays to the McCarthyite Gallery By Campaigning For A Blockade

Soviet Soldiers in Cuba and Castro's Offer of Demilitarization

If the presence of U.S. troops in South Vietnam serves to deter a mass invasion from North Vietnam and China, the presence of a few thousand Soviet troops in Cuba may also serve to deter our hotheads from an attack on Cuba. In any case the fuss stirred up from the Pentagon about a few thousand-man military mission—like the kind we have in so many countries abroad—begins to verge on the ludicrous. We were glad to see that Secretary of State Rusk at his press conference last Monday began gently to downgrade this latest menace and to remove it as an obstacle to negotiation with the Soviets on larger issues. In the meantime the Cuban offer, several times repeated, to accept demilitarization if there were real guarantees against aggression from the U.S. or U.S. supported groups remains unexplored. We believe peace groups could outflank the Pentagon by taking this up as a theme: if there are real reasons to fear Soviet military influence in Cuba, why not eliminate it by negotiating a demilitarized and neutralized Cuba under international guarantees? That would take care of fears on both sides.

A Liberal Moving Rightward

While the Rusk press conference indicated first faint efforts at disengagement on Cuba, the Administration is under pressure not only from the Republicans but from strange sources in its own Democratic party ranks for more aggressive policies. One of the strangest is Senator William Proxmire, the Wisconsin once liberal Democrat, who seems to be extending his efforts to ingratiate himself with rightist elements from fiscal to foreign policy. There is a big market in Wisconsin, as McCarthy's career showed, for synthetic hair-on-the-chest foreign policy and Proxmire seems to be moving to supply it. Proxmire is waging a one-man campaign to find out what happened to the economic blockade the Administration was trying to put into effect against shipping to Cuba when the missile scare and the "quarantine" came along. The most important part of this earlier plan called for barring U.S. financed cargo and U.S. ports to ships engaged in trade with Cuba. This aroused strong opposition, particularly from Britain, as an interference with freedom of the seas and in effect a blockade, or act of war.

On November 23 Proxmire released the text of a letter to Secretary Rusk saying he was baffled and disappointed by the failure to go forward with these plans to restrict shipping to Cuba. On Dec. 7 Proxmire released a reply from Assistant Secretary of State Frederick G. Dutton saying that these measures were "still under consideration" but decision on them had been deferred "until the larger security issues are settled." The letter added, "Recent events, as you are well aware, have resulted in a marked decrease in Free World shipping to Cuba. Discussions with our allies accounted in part for this decrease. These talks will continue, and our evaluation of their effect must be taken into account in considering further action." In other words, we hope to achieve the same results by behind scenes pressure. No matter how you phrase it, this is an effort to starve out Cuba in violation of elementary international law. A strange crusade for a man like Proxmire.

No Such Thought in JFK's Mind?

". . . the Havana regime began to warn Moscow that a U.S. invasion was imminent, although there was nothing to indicate that such a thought was in President Kennedy's mind at that time [when Castro arranged for Soviet missiles to be placed in Cuba]."

—Tad Szulc, in New York Times Magazine, Dec. 9

"The crisis was really born at the Bay of Pigs. . . . Six months later, in October, 1961, President Kennedy, still bearing his scars from the disaster, secretly ordered the Joint Chiefs of Staff to prepare an invasion plan for Cuba—to be used when and if needed. This top secret war plan took months to prepare, but when the strategists and computers had finished, with every plane, warship and assault unit tagged, it was calculated that the first troops could hit the Cuban beaches eight days after a 'go' signal. . . ."

—Washington in Crisis by Fletcher Knebel in Look Magazine, Dec. 18.

Dr. Samuel Shapiro, Friendly to Cuba, Dropped by Michigan State University

We urge a maximum effort to protest the action taken by Michigan State University-Oakland in dropping Samuel Shapiro as assistant professor and its senior American historian. Dr. Shapiro made himself "controversial" by articles he wrote for The New Republic and The Nation in the wake of three visits to Castro's Cuba, the first in August, 1960; the second in January, 1961 and the most recent in August 1962. Though critical of certain aspects, particularly the loss of civil liberties, Dr. Shapiro praised the constructive achievements of the revolution and opposed the U.S. policy of strangulation. The article let loose a flood of hostile publicity, and Dr. Shapiro has pending a suit for slander against a Lansing, Mich., TV commentator who called him a Communist.

A New Yorker who went to City College and took his Ph.D. at Columbia, Dr. Shapiro has taught at Brandeis and Oberlin and was a Fulbright professor in Argentina. He will finish his third year at Michigan State in April. He has now been informed that the board of trustees voted not to renew his contract. As usual in such cases, the university authorities, in interviews with Detroit newspapers, have sought to create the impression that they were acting only because Dr. Shapiro was not meeting academic standards, that he was getting too interested in journalism, was not producing scholarly work, etc. They also complained that he was spending too much time on Latin American affairs and Cuba, as if these were somehow too distant from U.S. history—though the problem of Cuba only a few weeks ago threatened to write our final chapter.

On the score of scholarship, Dr. Shapiro seems to be outstanding on his campus. Since Michigan State's establishment at Oakland in 1959, the whole faculty of some 60 teachers has produced only five books. The Michigan State press published Dr. Shapiro's doctoral, a biography of Richard Henry Dana, Jr. A second book of his, "Invisible Latin America," will be published next year by Beacon Press. Only a few months ago Michigan State granted him $700 to buy microfilms for a third book, on Daniel Webster.

Dr. Shapiro has been one of the few American scholars courageous enough to deviate from U.S. "party line" and to write sympathetically of Cuba. His dismissal will bring derisive echoes from Latin America. At home it will frighten others into silence or conformity. We urge a strong kick-back.

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Freedom More Than "Toleration of Occasional Differences About Matters of Small Importance"

Bertrand Russell's Memorable Message on Getting the ECLC Tom Paine Award

By Bertrand Russell

This is the memorable message sent by Lord Russell, the world's greatest living philosopher, to the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee in New York Dec. 15 on the presentation to him of its annual Tom Paine award:

You honor me in a way I deeply appreciate. Tom Paine symbolizes for Americans the articulation of a radical consciousness that human welfare and intellectual integrity depend upon courageous insistence upon freedom for men and women. Freedom can not effectively exist where it is understood to mean no more than the toleration of occasional differences about matters which are of small importance.

Disputes, for example, about the comparative merit of consumer produce or the total of farm expenditures may be cited as examples of freedom, but only by those who are dead to its life and deaf to its death. The vision of Tom Paine was that of a serious public involvement in the direction of those affairs which affected peoples' lives. He struggled for the right to partake in radical change and in the constant debate as to how the good life might be provided for the American people.

Our Fossilized Civil Liberties

Values and great beliefs live on after their institutional expressions have ceased to live. So it is with the nominal civil liberties enjoyed today either by Americans or by citizens of other countries.

Thousands of years of human effort, of great suffering, of unique achievement are in daily jeopardy because the absence of the freedom striven after by Tom Paine prevents men from forestalling consummate folly.

Today, the exercise of power is so remote from the daily lives of men and women, and the control of the very springs of thought so concentrated in the hands of those sycophantic to power, that freedom is increasingly an abstraction with which we are deluded.

Delusion takes the form of public incantation over values and beliefs which are dishonored even as they are invoked. President Kennedy speaks of human freedom as he takes actions which may condemn hundreds of millions of human beings to agonizing death. Future generations are forfeited to the paranoia of those who compulsively act for garrison states.

So it is that power possessed by the few condemns us all to futile death and empties our formal rights of meaning or of viable life. Only to the extent that we are able to remove those who would perpetrate this crime against humanity can "Freedom" be seriously our possession or our right.

I feel honored in a way I do not find easy to acknowledge. I am an Englishman and so was Tom Paine by birth. I believe that human freedom and the civilized ends to which that fredom was to have been directed, are not spoken for by the Governments of either of our two countries. I find it difficult to express the feelings I have upon receiving this award because I know how Tom Paine would feel about the country he left and the nation he helped to found.

The pity of it. The disgrace to all that is best in man's long odyssey. The intolerable affront to the dignity of us all, contained in the readiness to annihilate whole continents in pursuit of the insane dictates of power.

If there is one message, one sentiment I should wish to give to you, it is that I can not bring myself to believe that mankind is so base that none of its representatives will struggle for a more excellent way of life, no matter the chances of success. Thank you for your honor to me. We share the conviction that the struggle must go on.

A 10th Anniversary Thank You

This is the final issue of the tenth year of the Weekly. I never dreamed, when I launched it in Jan. 1953, at the height of McCarthyism, that it would last this long. It began with little more than 5,000 subscribers; newsstand and subscription sales today are close to 20,000. I am grateful to the readers for having made this adventure in independent journalism possible in so difficult a period. I must apologize for the many unanswered letters, but the reporting, writing, research and editing have been a one-man job and there has been no time to answer the mail. I want to say "thank you" now for the many kind messages, and their warmly sustaining, deeply appreciated affection.—IFS.

IFS Off to Cuba. Watch for His Report in The Next Issue Dated Jan. 7

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